

CLAIM SET AS AMENDED

1. (Currently Amended) ~~Circulating type~~ A circulating food and drink transport apparatus comprising:

a circular link chain;

a plurality of plates located on the link chain with a predetermined clearance; and

a traveling lane guiding and carrying the link chain, ~~wherein the lower portion of the traveling lane is closed by a substantially U-shaped receiver~~ closed by a substantially U-shaped receiver at the lower portion thereof;

a driving sprocket and a driven sprocket, both arranged at the corners of the traveling lane, and engaging the circular link chain for making a circular operation, said driving sprocket being fixed to a moving plate supported by a plurality of slide bosses mounted to a first fixed plate; and

a male screw of a first control knob rotatably supported by the first fixed plate, being screwed into a travel nut fixed to the moving plate,

whereby when the first control knob is rotated, the driving sprocket is moved to change a conveyance path length.

2. (Currently Amended) The circulating ~~type~~ food and drink transport apparatus according to claim 1,

~~wherein the link chain includes a chain driving section arranged at the corner of the traveling lane and a chain driven section arranged at another corner of the traveling lane, and a circular operation is made by the chain driving section and the chain driven section, and the chain driving section and the chain driven section are movable in accordance with a manual operation~~ said driven sprocket is attached to a second fixed plate via a plurality of slide bosses; and further comprising:

a male screw of a second control knob rotatably supported by the second fixed plate, is screwed into a take-up nut fixed to the slide boss,

whereby when the second control knob is rotated, the driven sprocket is moved is moved to change the conveyance path length.

3. (Currently Amended) The circulating ~~type~~ food and drink transport apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the link chain is configured by a plurality of chain units all having the same structure.

4. (Currently Amended) The circulating ~~type~~ food and drink transport apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the link chain includes a series of chain units having the same structure and a separable chain unit arranged at a proper position of the series of chain units.

5. (Currently Amended) The circulating ~~type~~ food and drink transport apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the separable chain unit is configured by ~~an~~ the upper plate, a

lower link arm and the upper link arm, a hollow shaft connecting a lower link arm and the upper link arms arm, and a roller rotating around the hollow shaft, and a link pin connecting the upper plate and the lower link arm ~~has~~ having separable upper and lower portions.

6. (Currently Amended) The circulating ~~type~~ food and drink transport apparatus according to claim 1, wherein part ~~(1A, 1B)~~ of the traveling lane is upwardly and downwardly foldable by ~~the~~ rotation around a hinge.

7. (New) The circulating food and drink transport apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the link chain includes a series of chain units, each of which is a separable chain unit.

8. (New) The circulating food and drink transport apparatus according to claim 1, and further including a hole in the upper plate and a hole in the upper link arm, so that when the upper link extends under the adjoining upper plate, the two holes are aligned.

9. (New) The circulating food and drink transport apparatus according to claim 8, wherein a the upper plate includes a portion around the hole that is thicker than other portions of the upper plate.

10. (New) A circulating food and drink transport apparatus comprising:

a circular link chain;

a plurality of plates located on the link chain with a predetermined clearance, each of the plates having a stepped-down portion extending under an adjoining plate; and

a traveling lane guiding and carrying the link chain, wherein the lower portion of the traveling lane is closed by a substantially U-shaped receiver,

wherein each of the plates is connected to and disconnected from an adjoining one of the plates by a single removable link pin.

11. (New) The circulating food and drink transport apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the link chain is configured by a plurality of chain units all having the same structure.

12. (New) The circulating food and drink transport apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the chain units include an upper plate, a lower link arm, an upper link arm, a hollow shaft connecting lower and upper link arms, and a roller rotating around the hollow shaft, and

wherein the link pin connecting the upper plate and the lower link arm has separable upper and lower portions.

13. (New) The circulating food and drink transport apparatus according to claim 10, wherein a part of the traveling lane is upwardly and downwardly foldable by the rotation around a hinge.

14. (New) The circulating food and drink transport apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the upper plate and the upper link arm of each of the plates are integrally formed and immovable with respect to each other.

15. (New) The circulating food and drink transport apparatus according to claim 12, wherein each of the plates is rotatable around the link pin penetrating through a central hole in the adjoining plate.